

Message Text

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PAGE 01 DURBAN 00126 221314Z

ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 IO-14 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-02
INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-15 COME-00 EB-08 LAB-04 SIL-01 AID-05 OMB-01
OC-06 CCO-00 SY-05 OPR-02 SCS-06 CA-01 MCT-01
/124 W

-----115856 221842Z /45

R 221200Z FEB 78

FM AMCONSUL DURBAN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2845

INFO AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN

AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG

UNCLAS DURBAN 0126

EO 11652: NA

TAGS: ELAB, PINT, SF

SUBJ: ISITHEBE STRIKE CONTINUES

REF: DURBAN 113

1. MEDIATION EFFORTS BY KWAZULU INTERIOR MINISTER DENNIS
MADIDE APPARENTLY HAVE CALMED SITUATION AT LEAST TEMPORARILY
AT KWAZULU INDUSTRIAL TOWNSHIP OF ISITHEBE, WHERE SOME 800
WORKERS WENT ON STRIKE AND STONED VEHICLES AND POLICEMEN
FEBRUARY 20 (REFTEL). PRESS REPORTS STRIKERS ARMED WITH
STICKS MARCHED THROUGH NEARBY TOWNSHIP STREETS EARLY FEBRUARY
21 URGING OTHERS TO JOIN STRIKE. SEVERAL THOUSAND REPORTEDLY
DID SO, BUT POLICE WITHHELD ACTION ON REQUEST OF LOCAL CHIEF
A.B. MATONSI, WHO KEPT CONTROL UNTIL MADIDE'S ARRIVAL LATER
IN THE DAY.

2. MADIDE APPEALED TO WORKERS TO RETURN TO WORK, PROMISING
HE WOULD NEGOTIATE WITH EMPLOYERS. WORKERS CITED FIVE
GRIEVANCES: (1) THEY WERE NOT RECEIVING SICK PAY; (2) COLOREDS
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PAGE 02 DURBAN 00126 221314Z

AND INDIANS ORIGINALLY EMPLOYED TO TRAIN AFRICANS WERE STILL
WORKING DESPITE LATTER'S ABILITY TO DO SAME WORK; (3) AFRICANS
IN SAME JOBS AS COLOREDS AND INDIANS WERE BEING PAID LESS;
(4) FIRED WORKERS WERE BEING "BLACK-LISTED" BY ISITHEBE FIRMS;
AND (5) SOME FIRMS FAILED TO PROVIDE PROTECTIVE CLOTHING.
MADIDE AGREED TO MEET WITH EMPLOYERS AND EMBARKED ON SERIES
OF DELIBERATIONS REPORTEDLY STILL UNDERWAY.

3. LATE ON AFTERNOON OF FEBRUARY 21 ABOUT 1000 AFRICANS ATTACKED A TOWNSHIP BEERHALL OWNED BY THE CORPORATION FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (FORMERLY BANTU INVESTMENT CORPORATION) STONING BOTH PATRONS AND THE BUILDING. THEY WERE EVENTUALLY DRIVEN OFF BY GUARDS. IT IS STILL UNCLEAR AT WHAT STAGE OF STRIKE DELIBERATIONS THIS INCIDENT TOOK PLACE.

4. ISITHEBE IS THE KWAZULU HOMELAND'S DESIGNATED INDUSTRIAL "GROWTH POINT", AND WHEN COMPLETED IN 1982 IS EXPECTED TO EMPLOY SOME 20,000 ZULUS IN APPROXIMATELY 150 FIRMS. AT PRESENT IT IS THE SITE OF 28 FIRMS EMPLOYING APPROXIMATELY 2000 WORKERS (77 DURBAN A-75).
FARBER

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